

Fallbarn



Conservation Area Appraisal

March 2008

Rossendale *aliye*
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Local Planning Authorities have a statutory obligation to designate as Conservation Areas those areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. National conservation guidelines place a responsibility on the Local Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and, in exercising their planning powers, to take into account the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance. Conservation Area legislation introduces additional controls aimed at protecting buildings and areas that contribute to distinctive character; and including the need for consent for demolition.

The Borough has nine designated Conservation Areas. Designations in the past have taken place in response to both a threat to an area's character or the recognition of the architectural and historic quality of individual areas. Rossendale's Conservation Areas cover a range of historic periods from the 17th to the 20th century, and include urban, suburban and semi-rural environments. As the Borough continues to regenerate and prosper protection of its heritage will be central to its economic and environmental improvement and to the recognition of its valuable history and culture.

Fallbarn Conservation Area was designated by the decision of Rossendale Council on the 7 November 2007. The initial impetus for the designations was the condition of Cherry Tree House and 3 and 5 Dam Top, and the owners proposals for the site. It was important they were

protected until their future had been fully explored. One advantage of designation was that if an appropriate residential scheme could be agreed between the owner and Rossendale Council, the exception within the Interim Housing Policy Statement in relation to listed buildings and important historic buildings might be applicable. The applicant would need to demonstrate

that the proposal will lead to the buildings under threat being saved and restored. Although a building does not have to be within a designated Conservation Area to meet this exception, it would add significantly to its case for residential development. It is important that designation is followed by a period of discussion with the affected and interested parties together with continued assessment of the area's history and detailed character.

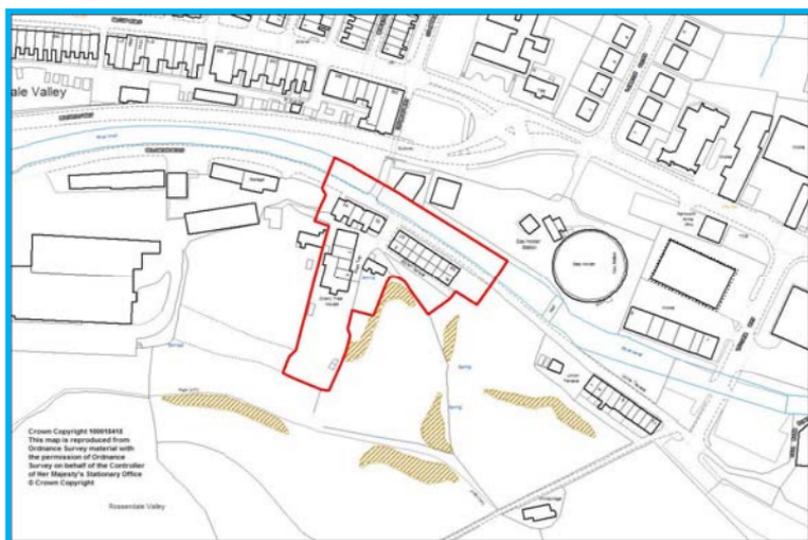


Figure 1: Fallbarn Conservation Area Boundary



This is essential to giving fully considered responses to all development proposals and to the area's future protection and enhancement. This appraisal of the Conservation Area describes the historical development of the area and its immediate surroundings, and describes the elements, which contribute to its special characteristics. It also considers aspects, which do not contribute positively to the area's protection and enhancement and puts forward actions and policies to remove or reduce their impact.

This document is not intended as a detailed evaluation of each building and feature, and omissions do not indicate a lack of merit or interest.

It is hoped that this appraisal will lead to an approved management plan for the Conservation Area. Appraisals and plans are expected to be reviewed at regular intervals. This allows the understanding of the area to develop. Future work is therefore expected to build on this initial and basic appraisal.

Summary of Special Interest

Summary of Special Interest

Fallbarn is a tight settlement set against the valley side and fronted by the River Irwell, by Fallbarn Road and the two large terraces of Merry Trees and Albert Terrace (*Fig 2*).



Figure 2: Albert Terrace and River Retaining Wall

Views of the group are fairly open from the riverside and there are also glimpses from Rawtenstall and up and down the valley. The two terraces form a gateway to the inner/upper part of the group. The bridge across the river runs close to this entrance. The river and the river wall (*Fig 3*) are an important part of the setting of the buildings, and the



Figure 3: River and River Walls

narrowness of Fallbarn Road reinforces the height and scale of Merry Trees and Albert Terrace. Set closely behind Fallbarn Road are Cherry Tree House, 3-5 Dam Top and Rose Cottage.



Figure 4: Cherry Tree House & Fall Barn

These stand as two building groups, Rose Cottage and the former barn being earlier than Cherry Tree House. There is a tight track leading into the group and up to the main house. Cherry Tree House is the tallest building in the group and sits at the top of the track. It dominates the settlement (*Figs 4 and 5*). Behind and around are fields of scrubby pasture which form enclosure through the steep hillside but which also bring shadow in winter.



Figure 5: Cherry Tree House

There are post and rail fences and copses of trees and shrubs around the area.

The buildings are a small but concentrated record of the growth from the modest early 19th century farm based settlement to the bold and slightly romantic gothic Victorian style of residential development of the mid 19th century. The grouping of the buildings reflects this difference and is important to the area's character. This is enhanced by the way the land and the track rise up from Fallbarn Road and views of the buildings and the landscape are formed. The river, in its cutting with the stone retaining and parapet walls, together with the spring and local details and features, are all part of this local scene.

Rawtenstall in the 1840s was not yet a town. It consisted of a series of small settlements, based either on agriculture or the beginnings of the textile industry. The construction of Bacup Road 1826 –1828 and the coming of the railway in 1846 were two of a number of changes that led to the rapid development of the town. Many of these settlements were absorbed as the town grew. Dam Top/Fallbarn appears to be an early settlement, possibly based on agricultural origins at the rising of a natural spring, and added to during the rapid expansion during the 19th century.

Fortunes were made during the rapid growth and increasing trade of the 19th century, and a number of local families dominated the town and the valleys around. Out of this wealth came benefactors wishing to provide new buildings for the

education and welfare of the townsfolk. Some of the same benefactors also wished to confirm their own status by building their own mansions and impressive industrial buildings. It was not uncommon for successful industrialist in the North West to engage nationally well-known architects to design and build their legacies. The story of Dam Top/ Fallbarn/Cherry Tree House is linked to such events

The Hardman family were long established woollen manufacturers in Rawtenstall, living at Oak Hill, now Whitaker Park Museum. Richard Hardman of New Hall Hey brought the architect and builder Richard Williams to Rawtenstall during the 1840s. At that time he was working on the Houses of Parliament. His arrival may have had some connection with Hardman's wish to make an impact in competition with the

Whitehead family. It appears that he may have been commissioned to build a small village at Fallbarn, responding to the success of the Whitehead's Holly Mount village. Cherry Tree House was designed and built by Richard Williams, and he is known to have lived there certainly from 1851 for a number of years. He is important to the history of the Borough due to both his level of output and quality of buildings. He designed and built a long list of industrial and residential buildings a few of which were - New Hall Hey Mill, Horncliffe House, Cliffe Tower, Springfield House, The Royal Hotel, Newchurch Unitarian Church, Hall Carr Mill, Alder Grange, Fern Villa, Victoria Mills, Forest Mill, Brougham Hall, Wesley Villa, and Heymount Mansion. He worked for all the important families during the second half of the 19th century and specialised in building on

difficult ground, in this case a form of quicksand, which had previously made many parts of the valley bottom impossible to use. He had a particular and significant impact on the town and is important to the story of Rossendale.



Figure 6: Date stone on Cherry Tree House

Only parts now remain of the Dam Top/Fallbarn village. Cherry Tree House/3 and 5 Dam Top remain and are vacant. At the time of its building the house was attached to the barn (ie Fall Barn, datestone 1846) and Cherry Tree House incorporates a date stone

1717 (*Fig 6*), which may have been from the farmhouse (or possibly a copy of the original date stone) it may have replaced.



Figure 7: Back to back housing on Fallbarn Road

It is known that Richard Williams also designed Alma Villas, 1851, referred to as a group of picturesque workers houses off Fallbarn Road. These are shown on the 19th century maps as a long back-to-back terrace curving along Fallbarn Road, and appear to be of the same scale as Albert Terrace (*Fig 7*), but were demolished during the first half of the 20th century.

However, fronting Fallbarn Road remain two interesting and different terraces. Merry Trees which is number 49 to 55 (odd) Fallbarn Road and Albert Terrace, understood to be numbers 2 to 14 (even) and 57 to 69 (odd) Fall Barn Road.



Figure 8: 1861 date stone

The front elevation of Albert Terrace has a date stone 1861 (*Fig 8*) and initials either IAH or IHA, linked to either the Hardman or Ashworth families. It could be speculated that these terraces were part of Hardman's village designed by Williams but no direct evidence of this has so far been found.

The area is a very tight group of buildings centred at the meeting of Fallbarn Road and the track leading down from Cherry Tree House. Merry Trees and Albert Terrace form the main public view of the group standing tall each side of the entrance track and facing the River Irwell in its stone walled cutting. Both are 2/3 storey bold Victorian properties built in roughly faced stone with tall and decorated slate covered roofs. Each has a stone plinth and railings to set them above road level. Merry Trees is finer in detail and decoration than Albert Terrace but the latter is much deeper in its footprint and is visually strong (*Fig 9*). Merry Trees has good stone detailing around windows and doors, tall chimneys, and has the remains of ornamental gothic window frames.



Figure 9: Albert Terrace

Looking up between the two terraces the remainder of the group can be seen. First of all, Fall Barn (*Fig 10*) is the main building in view, but on moving up the track the height and dominance of Cherry Tree House can be seen.



Figure 10: Fall Barn

The barn appears to be c1800 and possibly altered at the building of Cherry Tree House. It is a good plain building constructed in coursed stone with a slate roof. The stonework and coursing is good quality with two arched barn doors and strong cornerstones. The stone bonding at the meeting with 3 & 5 Dam Top shows the evidence of once being attached to a different building. The mullioned window at the rear is common in detail to others from c1800 in the local area. Looking up the track to the left is a small stone house (Rose Cottage) (*Fig 11*) built into raised ground and which, from parts of its walling, suggests a similar date to the barn. Below this is a spring and water trough (*Fig 12*) set in a stone wall and arch. The stonework on this is contemporary with the barn. Around are details such as



Figure 11: Rose Cottage



Figure 12: Spring and water trough

traditional stone and flagstone walls and gateposts, which add the special character of the area.

However, it is Cherry Tree House which is the dominant force in the group (*Figs 13 and 14*). It stands high above the barn, ranging from two to four storeys. It is built from pitched faced coursed stone with a steeply pitched slate roof. It is an austere copy of a 17th century mansion, built to a design common in the local area at that time.



Figure 13: Cherry Tree House

stone detailing is from the 17th century; including hood mouldings, stone window tracery, arches and lintels, cornices and verges; but being from the mid 19th century it is still sharp and not eroded. The Dam Top cottages provide the building bridge between the height of Cherry Tree House and the two storey Fall Barn.



Figure 14: Cherry Tree House Front Elevation

Parts of the house are of mixed heights, detailing, and jumbled rooflines. The front is symmetrical with a central 3 storey porch and mullioned windows to each side. The

Details

Merry Trees is a terrace of two and three storeys built in coursed pitched faced stone with a steeply sloping decorated slate roof (Figs 15 and 16). The terrace stands on a stone platform raised above road level and topped by large stone flags (Fig 17).



Figure 15: Merry Trees

This has been constructed to take up the change in levels and appears to accommodate cellars in the front part. There are small stone framed doors/coal holes in the front of the

platform. The railings on part of the platform may not be original. The three storey elements project at each end on the front elevation and have tall lateral gables and top floor windows.



Figure 16: Merry Trees



Figure 17: Stone Platform

There are dressed stone details at openings and corners with splayed edges and reveals. Openings have stone decoration and hood moulds with plain shield labels. There are splendid bay and oriel windows with canopies in slate and lead. The bay windows have rough stone arches visible. Numbers 53 and 55 (*Fig 18*) have largely retained the fine window frames, which have deep mouldings and triple



Figure 18: Numbers 53 and 55 Merry Trees

arched tops. There is a slightly projecting plinth at the base of the main walls.

There are single, 4 pot (*Fig 19*), and double, 8 pot, chimney stacks in dressed stone with coursed moulded stone pots and drip moulds. Timber barge boards remain but some original window styles have been altered to much plainer and simpler replacements, which have an odd and unfortunate appearance. This is the main alteration from the original design. None are currently in uPVC. The quality of the stone detailing is maintained on the gable elevations.



Figure 19: Chimney pots on Merry Trees

The back of the terrace is the product of a higher quality of design than is normally the case with rear elevations. Again there are big lateral gables and tall roof pitches with strong tallish outshots at ground level with double pitched roofs (Fig 20). Window openings are generally plainer. There is a modern timber dormer with French windows and a balustrade above the main eaves level, and an upper level conservatory at one end.



Figure 20: Rear of Merry Trees

This is a significant and high quality architect designed terrace worthy of protection and restoration.

Albert Terrace

(incorporating 57 to 69 Fall Barn Road) (Fig 21) is a two and three storey high stone terrace built in a robust and substantial style and longer than Merry Trees, having an additional central lateral bay and gable.



Figure 21: Albert Terrace

It is also of pitched face coursed stone with some dressed stone details, and sitting on an uncluttered stone raised platform, but is

in a much plainer and utilitarian style than Merry Trees. This suggests a later copy by a different designer. It has much of the form and scale of its neighbour though has greater depth (*Fig 22*), giving space for true back-to-back accommodation,



Figure 22: Albert Terrace
Gable

and this arrangement is clearly shown on the gables. The front elevation has plainer windows and simpler stone surrounds. Window openings in the gables are smaller.



Figure 23: Window frames and
doors in Albert Terrace

Window frames and doors are much altered and are of design and materials out of character with the original design of the building (*Fig 23*).

The rear elevation is much plainer with dressed stone only for the lintels and window sills. Each property has a simple dormer window in the roof giving three-storey accommodation. The rear is a busy elevation and has a regular pattern of windows, doors, pipework, aerials and satellite dishes (*Fig 24*).



Figure 24: Rear of Albert Terrace

Although Albert Terrace is less ornate than Merry Trees it has significant presence in the street.

Rose Cottage (*Fig 25*) is a detached stone building with a stone flag roof and a chimney stack with no pots. Some external walls are altered and all have been painted. The walls are partially in narrow watershot coursing, common in the 18th and early 19th century, and some parts appear to be earlier and others altered.

The building is set into the hillside. It is a slightly odd shape in being deep at right-angles to the roof ridge, and therefore with large gables. The gables have plain cement roof verges and there are simple small windows, though they are set in an unusual pattern. All this suggests that Rose Cottage was, some time ago, a different shape or part of a larger structure.



Figure 25: Rose Cottage

The doorway by the track has a deep lintel with a simple dripstone above. A conservatory/entrance porch is located to one side. Below the cottage a spring issues into a stone trough with a stone arched cover, all set into the ground and retained by a coursed stone wall. This sits by the access to Cherry Tree House adjacent to a stone gatepost within the retaining wall, which supports Rose Cottage garden. The stonework around the trough has been added to in a rough manner over time. The situation suggests that the trough might have at one time been exposed with the enclosure built at a later stage.

1 Dam Top and Fallbarn
(*Figs 26 and 27*) are part of the early farm settlement. The farmhouse part of the group thought to have been replaced by the building of Cherry Tree House and 3 and 5 Dam Top.



Figure 26: Fall Barn

The barn and number 1 are also built in watershot coursed stone with a slate roof containing rooflights and a new slender chimney stack.



Figure 27: Fall Barn

The building is a simple rectangle of two storeys with the barn door openings remaining each with a semi-circular arch top and large cornerstones at the returns. The elevation facing Rose Cottage also has two stone framed doorways and three window openings each with stone lintels and sills. The elevation to the riding school is the same but for an additional window, which has a central stone mullion, a feature common towards the end of the 18th or early 19th century. Timber effect uPVC frames now sit in the openings. In front of the building is the remains of a stone flag hardstanding with a small cobbled road.

Cherry Tree House and 3 to 5 Dam Top (Figs 28 and 29) are the most imposing structures in the group. In 2002 they were considered for statutory protection through the list of buildings of special architectural or

historic interest. The inspector's report made at that time describes the buildings as follows: Cherry Tree House and numbers 3 to 5 Dam Top together make up a complex of mid 19th century buildings built in an austere Neo-vernacular style reflecting the 17th century building tradition in the locality.



Figure 28: 3 to 5 Dam Top

The complex is built of regularly coursed local sandstone with ashlar dressings and a slated roof.

Its steeply-pitched roof and full height gabled porch have stone copings and ball finials, and the multi-light stone mullioned windows, those to the ground floor with segmental arches to the lights, and all mouldings with hood moulds with label stops.



Figure 29: Cherry Tree House

The window openings have sash frames without glazing bars, and the main doorway, set below a slightly jettied upper floor of the projecting porch, has a planked and studied door. The house is of double pile form, both parts

of two storeys with attics, together with a lower range of two storeys. This robustly-detailed building is a good example of its type. This example is a competent but not exceptional design. The building is clearly an important component of its locality, and of local historic interest.



Figure 30: Numbers 3 and 5 Dam Top

Looking up from between Albert Terrace and Merry trees the four storey gables dominate the view, with Rose Cottage more in the foreground. Numbers 3 and 5 (*Fig 30*) are less imposing, being the same height as Fall Barn and with a strong coping line, with parapet and pediment. Beyond the buildings is a largish area of open ground recently (as seen in December 2007) cleared of trees and shrubs. The land rises away from the buildings and gives an open setting to the main front elevation of the house. The boundaries are marked by squared stone random coursed walls with strong stone copings and post and rail fences. The wall has failed in a number of locations. The land rises again beyond the furthest boundary fence and the setting is formed by a group of trees and the hillside (*Fig 31*).



Figure 31: Trees and hillside

At the bottom of the track Fallbarn Road has a narrow carriageway and footways, all now finished with a bitumen surface. The riverside has a coursed stone parapet wall and attractive tooled pitched copings. The stone walls to the river cutting are both random and coursed pitched face stone. The footbridge across the river sits on iron beams with stone copings and above are iron post and rail balustrades. Modern lighting columns are located on the building side of the road and BT posts are in the riverside path. A car park for the use of patrons to the riding school is located

immediately to the east of the buildings, and the riding school is to the west (*Fig 32*).



Figure 32: Riding School Car Park

Positive Features

The following features contribute to the area's character:

1. All buildings in the Conservation Area are important to its character, both individually and the way they form part of the building group.

2. Cherry Tree House and Merry Trees are higher calibre buildings, the result of considered and knowledgeable design.

3. The relationship between the river, the road, the bridge and the two terraces fronting the roadway is important to the first impressions of the group.

4. The inner area, the views of Rose Cottage, Fall Barn, the stone trough and spring and Cherry Tree House form an essential part of a different character group within the heart of the area.

5. The open land and garden above Cherry Tree House give it the necessary room for the key elevations to be readily seen.

6. Although there has been some loss of original fabric and detail on the buildings, all retain their basic structure and elevational treatment. Some parts of buildings are extremely well preserved, including chimney stacks and some window frame detail (*Fig.33*).



Figure 33: Window Frame Detail

7. The various stone walls, flag hardstandings, copings, gateposts and stone features are important to the detailed character of the area (Fig. 34).



Figure 34: Stone Gatepost and Wall

8. The open views into and out of the area are important to the setting of the buildings and their contribution to the local scene.

9. Views linking the area with Green Bridge Mills complex of buildings are important to the area's setting (Fig.35).



Figure 35: Views of Green Bridge Mills

Negative Features

1. The condition of Cherry Tree House and 3 and 5 Dam Top.
2. The impact of the condition of Cherry Tree House etc on Fall Barn and the uncertainty for the future in terms of demolition, refurbishment and development.
3. The potential for unsympathetic changes to the setting of Cherry Tree House.

4. The nature of some detailed alterations and changes to all occupied properties that have removed original features or used out of character replacements. The most severe of these is the result of window alteration (*Fig.36*).



Figure 36: Examples of Window Alteration



Figure 37: Pedestrian Bridge

6. The condition of some boundary walls (*Fig.38*).



Figure 38: Poor condition of boundary wall

5. The poor appearance of the pedestrian bridge over the river (*Fig. 37*).

7. The impact of street lighting and BT poles on the appearance of the street (*Fig.39*).



Figure 39: Impact of street lighting

8. Apparent difficulty in finding parking space for residents (*Fig.40*).



Figure 40: Difficulty in finding parking space for residents

9. The lack of storage for the resident's bins (*Fig.41*).



Figure 41: Lack of Storage for residents bins

10. The nature of the commercial development to the north west of the area and the resulting impact on some views from and to the residential group and the Conservation Area.

Accommodating Change

It is generally accepted that the most appropriate way to protect and enhance the character of Conservation Areas is to guide change rather than to try to stop it. Settlements and communities cannot be preserved as a museum. They should prosper and develop, but in a way that retains the area's special character and protects what is best in terms of its positive elements. Change can also provide an opportunity to address outstanding issues and to seek improvements. The appraisal so far has attempted to define what is special about the area and to identify its positive and negative features. This is the start to building up a range of policies and proposals for the area.

It is unreasonable to expect an area to be stuck in time, in this case various periods during the 19th century. Progress has had its impact on the area through the visual expression of modern development and communications – street lighting, satellite dishes etc.

The move from tenanted to owned property has also led to the individualisation of property, moving away from the visual harmony of terraces. Conservation Area status seeks to temper the extremes of change and encourage the enhancement of area character. The level of control and restriction is, however, less severe than that for individually protected listed buildings. Also, due to the responsibility for Conservation Areas being based with the Local Planning Authority, there is some flexibility at a local level and an opportunity for the affected community to contribute to the debate about the future of the area.

From the beginnings of understanding the area's special character and identifying positive and negative factors, the following policies are put forward. There are a number of factors that will influence their implementation and time scales cannot, at this stage, be identified.

1. That all the existing buildings within the Conservation Area should be retained, and that their physical relationship and grouping should be protected.

2. That efforts should be made to save and use Cherry Tree House and 3 to 5 Dam Top, ideally through working with the current owner, but also through all means open to the Council. It is probable that this may only be achieved through the subdivision of the property and possibly supported by the residential development of the land associated with the house.

Any such scheme could only be acceptable if it respected the character and the setting of the house and the other buildings in the area and had minimum impact on the local amenities. It would need to comply with all the relevant planning policies of the Council. The Council would expect an open book policy for such a development accepting only proposals that achieved a reasonable return for risk. The development may also be required to cross-fund, through planning obligations, associated improvements within the approach to the site, such as the upgrading of the access road in appropriate traditional materials.

3. The designation of a Conservation Area introduces some additional controls over demolition and the alteration of external walls and roofs on houses. However, a number of changes to dwellings are still possible without planning permission. Rossendale Council has previously approved the use of Article 4 Directions in Conservation Areas. This provides additional powers to control external alterations to dwellings. Changes such as the alteration of windows and doors, and all extensions, consequently come within planning control. It is considered that this additional control should apply to Fallbarn, as many of the unfortunate recent changes come within the permitted development category.

The Council should provide design guidance to assist residents with the existing and any additional controls, and the need to use traditional details and materials.

4. There appears to be a lack of parking space in the area, together with a lack of bin storage. These are both practical issues which impact on the area's character. Opportunities for resolving these two issues need investigation, possibly in the context of land adjacent to Fallbarn Road to the east.

5. The river bridge requires refurbishment and the cast iron balustrade repainting. It may be necessary for a health and safety check to be undertaken. Ownership and responsibilities will need to be investigated.

6. When the repair or renewal of street lighting is to be undertaken consideration should be given to a more appropriate design of new column for the area.



7. The upgrading of the access road in an appropriate traditional material would enhance the character of the Conservation Area. This has been referred to as part of the proposals for Cherry Tree House. However, it is a proposal in its own right and the responsibilities for this need to be discussed with the appropriate owners.

8. Stone walls, gateposts and features are important to the area's character. They should not be removed or demolished and if in poor condition should be repaired.

The draft Fallbarn Conservation Area Appraisal has been forwarded to the Rossendale Civic Trust and all residents within the Fallbarn Conservation Area, and a meeting was held with the Civic Trust and the residents to discuss the appraisal on the 18 February 2008. Ten residents attended the meeting. There was general support for the appraisal's content at the meeting. However, the residents raised a long list of issues. In response to this it is proposed that in addition to the recommendations in the previous section of the appraisal, the following should be investigated by the Council and other appropriate bodies.

1. Grant - aid towards the potential additional cost to house owners of complying with the additional Conservation Area controls.
2. Issues of highway safety, traffic speed and weight limits, access and parking, lighting and signage, all affecting this part of Fallbarn Road.
3. The condition of the retaining wall to the River Irwell and the impact of heavy traffic.
4. Consideration of the extension of the Conservation Area to include the approach to Fallbarn adjacent to the subway leading to Lever Street.

Contact Details

If you need to contact the Council in connection with the Conservation Area in general, or about changes to land and individual buildings, please use the Conservation Officer and Development Control telephone numbers below:

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Other Useful Contacts

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Rated 'GOOD' by the Audit Commission